

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 00123 01 OF 02 121055Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 ACDA-12 IO-13 /084 W  
-----127303 121109Z /11

R 120939Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2266  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
USMISSION USNATO  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HELSINKI 0123

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UR, NO, SW, FI, XZ  
SUBJECT: ASSESSMENTS OF SOVIET NORDIC POLICY

REF: (A) 77 MOSCOW 18499 (DTG 231600Z DEC 77), (B) 77 HELSINKI 3084  
(DTG 301310Z DEC 77), (C) STOCKHOLM 036 (DTG 041422Z JAN 78)

1. WE FOUND INTERESTING AND USEFUL THE APPROACH TAKEN BY  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM IN ITS RESPONSE (REFTEL C) TO AMEMBASSY  
MOSCOW'S ANALYSIS OF SOVIET NORDIC POLICY (REFTEL A).

2. WE DID NOTICE THAT AT SEVERAL POINTS STOCKHOLM'S  
MESSAGE APPEARS TO SPEAK FOR GENERAL NORDIC VIEWS AND  
ATTITUDES AND TO REFER TO SPECIFIC FINNISH DEVELOPMENTS  
AND ISSUES; WITH RESPECT TO FINNISH EQUATIONS, AT LEAST,  
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PAGE 02 HELSIN 00123 01 OF 02 121055Z

WE WOULD LIKE TO RECORD OUR VIEWS ON SEVERAL POINTS.

3. THE PURPOSE OF OUR MESSAGE (REF B) IN RESPONSE TO  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW'S THOUGHTFUL STUDY OF SOVIET NORDIC  
POLICY, WAS TO PRESENT THE FINNISH VIEW OF ITS OWN  
SECURITY POLICY, TO DESCRIBE HOW THE DYNAMICS OF  
THE SOVIET/FINNISH RELATIONSHIP AFFECT FINNISH POLICY

IN THE NORDIC AREA, AND TO ATTEMPT TO PREDICT HOW FINLAND MIGHT REACT TO THE POSSIBLE SOVIET POLICY INITIATIVES HYPOTHESIZED BY AMEMBASSY MOSCOW. WE TRUST OUR MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN READ TO SAY THAT WE IN THE EMBASSY BELIEVE SOVIET REQUESTS FOR CONSULTATION ARE ATTEMPTS TO REDUCE TENSIONS IN NORTHERN EUROPE. WE WERE DESCRIBING FINNISH VIEWS OF WHERE FINLAND'S INTERESTS LIE AND THE CONSEQUENT FINNISH PERCEPTIONS OF HOW TO RESPOND "TO INCREASED SOVIET...PRESSURE...TO ESTABLISH REGULAR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NORDIC COUNTRIES..." IN THAT SETTING "FINLAND WOULD SEE IT VERY MUCH IN ITS OWN INTERESTS TO ATTEMPT TO REDUCE TENSIONS IN NORTHERN EUROPE THROUGH SOVIET CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NORDIC COUNTRIES..." WE SHARE AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM'S SEPTICISM CONCERNING THE INNOCENCE OF SOVIET POLICY OBJECTIVES IN THE NORDIC REGION. WE AGREE THAT INFLUENCE IS THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN OF CONSULTATIONS; WE SUSPECT THE FINNS WOULD ALSO AGREE ON THE LINK BETWEEN CONSULTATIONS AND SOVIET INFLUENCE, ALTHOUGH DOUBTLESS THEY ARE LESS SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET MOTIVES THAN WE.

4. THE SHIP VISIT QUESTION REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE STOCKHOLM MESSAGE IS ALSO A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT MIGHT APPEAR FROM A DISTANCE. IT IS TRUE THAT THERE WERE EXPRESSIONS OF SOVIET UNHAPPINESS CONCERNING AN FRG NAVAL VISIT  
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PAGE 03 HELSIN 00123 01 OF 02 121055Z

TO HELSINKI (THE VISIT IN QUESTION WAS IN 1977, NOT 1976). IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THE FINNS NOTIFIED THE EMBASSY THAT THE SEASON BETWEEN MAY AND SEPTEMBER 1978 WOULD BE A MORE SUITABLE TIME FOR A US NAVAL SHIP VISIT THAN THE TIME ORIGINALLY REQUESTED BY THE US NAVY (NOVEMBER 5-8, 1977). IN REQUESTING THE POSTPONEMENT, THE FINNS PRESENTED SEVERAL REASONS-- INCLUDING THE NEED FOR BALANCE (THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN EIGHT FOREIGN NAVAL VISITS TO HELSINKI IN 1977, ALL FROM THE WEST), LACK OF LEADTIME FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, LACK OF FUNDS FOR APPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY, ETC. ALSO, ONCE THE FINNS RAISED THE QUESTION WE REALIZED WE HAD PROPOSED A SHIP VISIT THAT WOULD HAVE FALLEN DURING THE SOVIET CELEBRATION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION. THUS, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON THE SHIP VISIT OF COURSE REFLECTS FINNISH SENSITIVITY TO SOVIET ATTITUDES, WE CONSIDERED THE REQUEST FOR POSTPONEMENT UNDERSTANDABLE AND DID NOT PRESS THE FINNS TO GO FORWARD WITH IT. WE BELIEVE THAT NOT TOO MUCH MEANING BEYOND THE READILY VISIBLE SHOULD BE READ INTO THE EPISODE. IN ANY CASE, THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT HAS SUBSEQUENTLY RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO THE EMBASSY'S PROPOSAL OF

A US NAVAL SHIP VISIT TO HELSINKI IN LATE SEPTEMBER  
OR EARLY OCTOBER 1978.

5. WHEN WE DISCUSS SOVIET INTEREST IN HAVING  
"CONSULTATIONS," IT IS WORTH UNDERSCORING THAT A SOVIET CALL  
FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH FINLAND UNDER THE 1948 TREATY OF  
FRIENDSHIP, COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE (FCMA)  
WOULD BE A FAR DIFFERENT MATTER FROM ANY DIPLOMATIC  
CONSULTATIONS THAT MIGHT BE HELD BETWEEN THE SOVIET  
UNION AND OTHER NORDIC COUNTRIES, EITHER BILATERALLY OR  
MULTILATERALLY. THE FCMA TREATY CALLS FOR CONSULTATIONS  
BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE SOVIET UNION IF IT IS ESTAB-  
LISHED THAT THE THREAT OF AN ARMED ATTACK IS PRESENT.  
AMONG OTHER POINTS, SUCH CONSULTATIONS WOULD DETERMINE  
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PAGE 04 HELSIN 00123 01 OF 02 121055Z

WHETHER FINLAND WOULD REQUIRE THE "ASSISTANCE" OF THE  
SOVIET UNION IN REPELLING A POSSIBLE AGGRESSOR.  
THEREFORE, WE DO NOT LOOK UPON THE THREAT OF THE  
SOVIETS PROPOSING CONSULTATIONS WITH FINLAND AS SIMPLY  
ONE OF AN ARRAY OF NORDIC PRESSURE POINTS TO WHICH THE  
SOVIET UNION MIGHT LIGHTLY TURN IN AN EFFORT TO BEEF  
UP ITS INFLUENCE IN THE NORDIC REGION. IT WOULD BE, AS  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW POINTED OUT, A VERY SERIOUS STEP WHICH  
WE THINK WOULD BE USED WITH FINLAND LATER RATHER THAN  
EARLIER IN ANY SOVIET DRIVE TO ALTER SERIOUSLY CURRENT  
NORDIC RELATIONSHIPS.

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 00123 02 OF 02 121059Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 ACDA-12 IO-13 /084 W  
-----127340 121109Z /12  
R 120939Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2267  
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON  
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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HELSINKI 0123

6. ALSO, WE DISAGREE THAT IT SHOULD BE US NORDIC POLICY, INTER ALIA, TO INCREASE OUR RESPECT "FOR FINLAND'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR" (REFTEL C, PARA 9). WE RECOGNIZE FINLAND'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION AS A HARD REALITY THAT LIMITS FINNISH INDEPENDENCE AND CONSTRAINS HER ABILITY TO FOLLOW AN OBJECTIVELY NEUTRAL FOREIGN POLICY. RATHER THAN INCREASING OUR RESPECT FOR THAT SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP, HOWEVER, THE US INTEREST IS TO LIMIT THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE. IT IS US POLICY (TOGETHER, WE HOPE, WITH OTHER WESTERN FRIENDS OF FINLAND) TO DO WHAT WE CAN WITHIN OUR CAPABILITIES TO MAXIMIZE THE DEGREE OF FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY.  
RIDGWAY

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